

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 07QUITO885, CORREA DEFUSES DEADBEAT DAD STORY C-AL7-00365

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07QUITO885**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">07QUITO885</a>	<a href="#">2007-04-18 19:20</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Quito</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://m.elcomercio.com/wikileaks/cable.php?c=a87ff67>  
<http://m.elcomercio.com/wikileaks/cable.php?c=e4da3b7>  
<http://m.elcomercio.com/wikileaks/cable.php?c=1679091>

VZCZCXYZ0030  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0885 1081920  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 181920Z APR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6801  
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 6590  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 2502  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR 0545  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 1588  
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 2201  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000885

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TEN YEARS

Classified By: PolOff Erik Martini for reasons 1.4 (b&d).

¶1. (U) Summary: A recent attempt by Lucio Gutierrez to tar President Rafael Correa for his father's sins appears to have backfired. The open secret of Correa's sordid family history became public on April 13, on the eve of the government's referendum, when PSP deputy Luis Almeida alleged during a television interview that Rafael Correa senior had been arrested and incarcerated for drug trafficking in the United States in the 1970s. In his radio address of April 14, Correa confirmed the allegation, generating widespread sympathy with the story of how his family dealt with the difficult situation during his childhood. Gutierrez' mudslinging began immediately after results for the referendum were in and has fed a backlash against him from the media. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On April 13, to the evident horror of his television interviewer, maverick Patriotic Society (PSP) deputy Luis Almeida claimed President Rafael Correa's father, now deceased, was a convicted narco-trafficker. On April 14 and 15, PSP leader Lucio Gutierrez repeated the charges, calling for President Correa, the "son of a delinquent" to stop labeling him and others in the opposition with the term "mafia."

¶3. (U) Correa responded to the charge during his weekly radio address on April 14, saying "I have nothing to hide. I had a very difficult childhood." He explained that his father left his family when he was five years old, worked as a drug mule, and served three years in a U.S. prison. When his father was gone, his mother maintained the family by cooking and sending Rafael to deliver food after school. He said his father was a victim of the system, and implied that his father's act of desperation made him one of many who were excessively punished for a relatively minor drug infraction. To strong applause, he said "how can you blame me for what my father did 40 years ago?" He said he grew up thinking that his father was working in the U.S.; his mother did not tell him the truth of his father's situation until he was 18. Later, at a press conference after the voting on April 15, Correa refused further comment, responding to a questioner "I'm sorry, senorita, but I don't have time to deal with this garbage."

¶4. (U) The smear campaign, timed to influence popular referendum voting on April 15, immediately generated a media backlash against Gutierrez. Major TV personality Rodolfo Baquerizo, who is generally sympathetic to Gutierrez, said "I don't think it's correct, ethical or decent" to drag family into politics. One TV interviewer simply ignored Gutierrez's rant and another criticized him for making an irrelevant accusation that contributes nothing to national conciliation. Luis Almeida's interviewer, Jorge Ortiz, responded dismissively "if it's true, it's his deceased father."

¶5. (C) Emboffs learned from PSC sources about Correa's father's history in October, 2006 and confirmed through LegAtt Santiago that he was arrested in New York City in 1968 for smuggling cocaine into the U.S. and sentenced to five years in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta that same year. He was released on June 25, 1971. Media sources also reportedly learned of the story, but it did not become public until Almeida made his declarations on April 13th.

Comment

¶6. (C) Gutierrez' mudslinging has backfired, fueling sympathy for Correa. After strong criticism from all quarters, the story had dropped completely from the headlines by April 17th and had no effect on the overwhelming referendum vote. Indeed, Correa has turned the story to his advantage, admitting the allegations, presenting the public with a sympathetic picture of his character and upbringing,

and leaving Gutierrez and company looking petty.

17. (C) Correa's childhood clearly influences his perceptions on the drug war: he has repeatedly said the prisons are too full of minor traffickers serving harsh sentences, and that more effort should be directed at the kingpins. Correa's childhood also adds an emotional underpinning to his opinions on the factors that lead desperate Ecuadorians to migration, having experienced first hand the difficult results for families.

JEWELL